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One Awful Night

MEADOW LEA, MAN.

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T WAS winter, and the wind blew keen,
Blew with its might and main;
And more and more the snow did blow
Across the stormy plain.

And now without, and fiercer yet
The Storm King raged and blew;
And nearer to the fire within
The little company drew.

That night John Taylor sat beside
His wife and daughters three;
And pleasantly the hours flew by,
At home in Meadow Lea.

A lady friend was staying there,
And, oh! with what delight
Those fond young tongues would rattle on,
Regardless of the night..

They talked' of old Ontario,
Of Peel, their native place,
Of the old home so far away,
And each remembered face.

Of Stanley's Mills and Harrison,
Awhile their chat would be,
And then, again, of new-found friends
At home in Meadow Lea.

And lo! what light is this they see
Reflected on the ground?
"Fire! fire! the housetop's in a blaze!"
They all cry with a bound.

Out in the storm they wildly rushed,
To work they gallant go;
But who could stay a fire like this,
In such a blinding snow?

No neighbor's house or light is seen,
Whichever way they turn,
And so these helpless ones seemed doomed
To either freeze or burn

Then cried the youngest fearless girl;
"I'll to my uncle's go;
And bring strong arms to help you all,
Or perish in the snow."

Then off she set, but missed her way
Across the stormy plain,
And helpless, through that cold, cold night,
For succor watched in vain!

Then cried another daughter true,
"I'll search the prairie wide,
I'll bring my sister back again,
Or perish by her side."

Ill-fated pair to venture forth
In such a whirl of snow;
Misguided love to urge them on,
Where scarce a man would go.

'Twas almost noon, at William's house,
When one of them did say,
"I'll go and see how uncle fares
On such a wretched day."

He went; but, oh did ever eye
Behold so sad a sight?
Arount him death and ruin lay,
The work of that cold night.

A mother, and her daughters three,
Had perished on the plains,
And of that happy family,
But John alone remains.

The neighbors gather, one by one,
And searched the prairie round,
And here and there in reefs of snow,
A frozen corpse was found.

Was ever anything so sad?
Or did you ever see
A case so strange and pitiful,
As this in Meadow Lea?